



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Valerie Ervin

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Councilmember Valerie Ervin Voices Concerns for Residents, Businesses, Commuters and Taxpayers as Council Reviews Issues with Silver Spring Transit Center

*Councilmember Ervin Requests Industry Expert to Advise
Council on Remediation Efforts for Transit Center*

ROCKVILLE, Md., April 3, 2013—The Montgomery County Council on April 2 approved an additional \$7.5 million for legal and engineering consultant fees, and staff charges, associated with the construction delays that have occurred over the past year for the Paul Sarbanes Transit Center project in downtown Silver Spring. This appropriation was needed to reimburse providers for work already approved by the County's Executive Branch.

While Councilmember Valerie Ervin recognized that the funding was necessary to keep the project moving forward, she expressed serious concerns about the ongoing budget impact of the continuing delays and cost overruns with the project. Since 2008, \$41 million has been added to the cost of the transit center. The cost increases were linked to numerous change orders, increased material costs, permitting and utility approval delays, and site improvements.

"During a period of years where the County has exercised tremendous fiscal restraint, the cost of this project has continued to balloon over time, and we still do not have a safe facility for our commuters," said Councilmember Ervin, who represents District 5, which includes Silver Spring. "Montgomery County residents, especially those who live in and around Silver Spring, have been enduring the public transportation obstacles associated with the Silver Spring Transit Center for far too long."

On March 19, the County Executive and his team informed the Council that residents will continue facing these burdens for an undetermined amount of time because there is still no firm date for opening the transit center. This information was shared at a Council briefing related to the release of a report from KCE Structural Engineers, who reviewed the design and construction and conducted an inspection of the entire structure. KCE found a variety of problems associated with the design, construction and concrete strength.

“It's time to move forward with appropriate remediation efforts to correct the problems identified so we can get our residents moving again,” said Councilmember Ervin. “Residents, who are understandably fed up with the difficulties accessing the Metro in Silver Spring, are going to other stations. This not only inconveniences our residents, it also negatively impacts the bottom line for businesses in and around Silver Spring and hampers economic development.”

With more than 57,000 patrons and 1,250 bus trips per day, the Silver Spring Transit Center is one of the largest transportation hubs in the region. Ridership is expected to grow to 97,000 by 2024.

Councilmember Ervin requested that the Council get advice from an independent industry expert to evaluate the remediation efforts that will be proposed by the County Executive.

“The complexity and scale of this project requires an independent evaluation of the information we are being provided,” said Councilmember Ervin. “None of us are structural engineers or construction experts, and Councilmembers need to ensure that the remediation proposals we receive from the County Executive will achieve a safe, functional transit center for a residents in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.”

EDITOR'S NOTE: The memorandum requesting that the Council secure an industry expert to review data and recommendations provided on the Silver Spring Transit Center is electronically attached to this news release.

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